

SECRET

11 October 1950

MEMORANDUM TO EXO

FROM: Chief, STB

SUBJECT: Destruction of Cables

1. Present regulations providing for destruction of cables, as contained in Basic Cable Procedures paragraph 4400 (SOPG No. 5 Revised, dated 2 May 1950), demand so much labor and are so unproductive of the security for which they were designed, that it is believed of the highest importance to have them revised immediately.

2. Estimates just made by Staffs A, B, and C of the time required to list and destroy cables, as prescribed in paragraph 4400 of Basic Cable Procedures, indicate that thirty seconds of an employee's time is required for each copy. Estimates made by Communications Division show that an average of 286 messages with 3,000 copies are distributed to OSO in "I" Building daily. On an average about six copies of each message are made at stations overseas. Consequently, in the course of a year 1,400,000 copies of cables must be destroyed. At thirty seconds each, destruction of these cables would require the full time of five employees. In individual offices the burden may become heavy, e.g., STB received 1,542 cables in July, excluding Top Secret. STB's copy of the certificate of destruction of cables for one month--a thirty-four-page list--is attached as a sample of this laborious procedure.

3. Some excuse for such use of manpower would exist, were the full requirements of security met by this procedure. The requirements are not met, however. Lists of destroyed cables received in the Signal Center are not checked against lists of cables originally distributed. The Signal Center informs me that several additional persons would be required to check these lists. Even if they were checked and all copies were accounted for, the information contained in the cables could have been transmitted illegally or copies made. It is fundamentally unsound to maintain regulations that cannot be followed, and it has been found that some units of OSO are compelled to postpone compliance indefinitely.

SECRET

SECRET

-2-

4. It is recommended that this matter be referred to the OSO/OPC Communication Board with request that a recommendation for a new procedure for destruction of cables be prepared as soon as possible. Three extra copies of this memorandum are included, which may be distributed through Chief, Communication Board. *D/V*



Chief, STB

Attachment (Return to STB)

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